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ABSTRACT

This paper represents a phenomenological approach to studying the lived experiences of nine African American graduate students. By outlining a step-by-step process, the paper demonstrates how in-depth interviews with narrators can help to reveal the essential structure of the phenomenon of prejudice. Following the process of thematic reduction, the paper analyzed revelatory phrases of the students for themes which arranged themselves in a natural order to provide examples, consequences, and strategies for dealing with ethnic prejudice in a majority host institution. Contains 46 references. (Author/RS)

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BODIES BONDED BY TEMPORALITY: SURVIVING ETHNIC PREJUDICE IN A MAJORITY HOST INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper represents a phenomenological approach to studying the lived experiences of nine African American graduate students. By outlining a step-by-step process,. the paper demonstrates how in-depth interviews with narrators can help to reveal the essential structure of the phenomenon of predjudice. Following the process of thematic reduction, revelatory phrases of the students were analyzed for themes which arranged themselves in a natural order to provide examples, consequences, and strategies for dealing with ethnic predjudice in a majority host institution.

INTRODUCTION

"What it's like to be black"

To be black is to be stereotyped
To be black is not to be white
To be black is thought of as negative
To be black is never thought of as positive
To be black is to be hated
To be black is to be undereducated
To be black is to be destroyed
From the beginning of birth as a girl or boy

But let's look at the bright side
of the very, very, very dark side
And listen very closely to me
of why I'm proud to be ebony

To be black is never to be pale
To be black is to excell
To be black is to be proud
To be black is to say it loud
To be black is to be beautiful
To be black is to be mentally fruitful
To be black is to be the first
of who walked this planet earth...

Too black, too strong, too strong, too black
and most whites can't understand that
They can't feel the agony
of pain and stress of a black mentality
They can't see the realities
because we live in a white structured society...

(Sidney Irvine, Ohio University student rapper, 1992)

To describe "what it's like to be black"--to reveal the essence of a phenomenon-- is a difficult task. The African American experience is not a monolith, which can be summarized easily . As Irvine indicates in the lyrics above, a complete understanding (verstenshen) of the African American experience is extremely complex. However, this paper offers several contributions in understanding the experiences of African American graduate students. Specficially, it articulates the lived-world (lebenswelt) experiences of nine African American graduate students attending a majority host institution of higher learning in the United

States. By focusing on the experiences of the students (narrators), the essential structures of their live-worlds are revealed.

The graduate degree has been touted as a normative mechanism in gaining access and acceptance into the dominant culture (DeJoie, 1977). For African Americans however, advanced educational attainment has meant struggling to rise above the stigma of a 400 year old educational descendance in America. A system which has been shaped by over 200 years of slavery, 100 years of segregation, less than 40 years of desegregation, and continued oppression (Silver, 1992).

For African Americans today, gaining access to the normative measure on predominantly white campuses can mean walking across campus on the first day of classes and seeing few, if any, African American students. Gaining access can mean facing any number of racial incidents from verbal and physical assaults to death threats (see e.g. Winbush, 1992). Gaining access can also mean encountering all Anglo professors and being surrounded in class and in the residence halls by all Anglo, or nearly all Anglo students. Being African American at a majority institution is to study from textbooks that contain Eurocentric theories and his-stories that are largely irrelevant to the African American's lebenswelt; and when pointing this out, to be called an 'ethnic cheerleader' (Daly, 1990). For most students, the graduate experience is one which reflects a certain amount of stress and "craziness" (Ford-Ahmed, 1992; Kapoor, 1992; Lengal, 1992), however this experience is even more difficult for those students whose existence is marginalized.

Following a great surge of enrollment by African Americans into higher education programs during the 1970's, their numbers have continued to decline in alarming proportions. For example, African American student enrollment in graduate school dropped 16.3% from 65,326 to 54,686 in 1982 (Kunjufu, 1991).

Of the 36,027 doctoral degrees awarded In 1990, 820 went to African Americans. African American women received 508 or approximately 1% while African American men earned a mere 320 - less than 1% (DePalma, 1992). In short, being an African American graduate student at a majority host institution often is to be unrepresented, under-represented and mis-represented.

The Dilemma of African American Men

Many scholars have described the current situation for the African American male in this country as "The Black Male Crisis" or "The Destruction of the Black Male" (Kunjufu, 1991). These descriptions are founded in light of several alarming statistics. African American males are seven times more likely to be murdered than Anglo males (Deadly, 1992). In addition, whereas African American males constitute 8.5% of students in public schools, over 36% of special education students are African American males (Kunjufu, 1991). Kunjufu (1991) further reports that one out of every African American men are incarcerated, paroled, or on probabtion--and even more than that are unemployed. The plain truth is that African American men are overrepresented in every major social ill and social problem (For summary, see Orbe, 1993).

While "the black male crisis" refers to African American men across a number of institutional levels, statistics that indicate their lack of success (or absence) at colleges and universities is especially alarming. Kunjufu (1991) reports that 609,000 African American men are in prison, compared to 436,000 who are enrolled in college. While the 1970s and 1980s experienced an increase in the enrollment of African American men into colleges and universities, that number has decreased significantly in recent years. These recent trends have generated a number of research studies aimed at gaining insight to the "plight of the African American man" (e.g. Orbe, 1993).

Dilemma of the African American Women

The African American female graduate students is often "told and made to feel" as though she is 'different' by the majority population (Kapoor, 1992). This 'difference' reflects the dilemma of the African American graduate woman who must struggle with the oppressive forces of both racism and sexism (hooks & West, 1991) and social-economic deprivation (Peterson, 1992). Economics bears a special significance for Black graduate women who are most likely to be the last considered for research assistantships (Kahn & Robbins,1985)..

Research data shows that students who receive grants are more likely to persist in completing their graduate programs. According to the National Research Council (1990) one quarter of African Americans receive this type of award and those that do, often use the money to pay their tuition (DePalma, 1992). Thus, the majority are more likely to rely on personal resources and loans to finance their education (Nettles, 1990 Thomas, 1989). Michele Wallace describes that "financial ruin, ignorance and despair" form the same attachment to African American women as trained pets in need of "food and water" (quoted in Kapoor, 1992, p.4).

As reported in Ford-Ahmed (1992) (see also Orbe, 1993), the vast majority of research completed on African Americans has reflected a traditional empirical approach. Although these postivitic studies offer some insight, they fail to reflect the multi-dimensional nature of the African American experience. The result of this problematic is an abrupt, brief, interrupted "commuters" view.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

For the most part, researchers have used a positivistic approach and reported statistical data (much like that reported heretofore) to hypothesize the current situation that African Americans experience (for example see Byrd,

1991; Wyche & Frierson, 1990; McCauley, 1988; DeJoie, 1977). However, much of this data does little to capture the lived experiences of African American graduate students. This study aims to enrich the body of African American student research by turning to the nature or "essences" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) of their experience in a majority host institution. It attempts to dis-cover the fundamental structure of this experience and its' meaning in their life-world. Therefore a different system of inquiry is necessary. A different perspective is needed that explores the commonly experienced world or the 'natural attitude' of African American graduate students attending a majority institution. An inquiry is needed that goes beyond the students as mere objects of investigation to include the whole gamut of human emotions, values, practical concerns, and obligations (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990). Basically, an exploration that seeks *meaning* not measure (Georgi, in Crow, 1981). In this sense it is phenomenological.

Hermeneutic phenomenal reflection represents a methodology whicn describes, thematizes, and interprets *meaning* in a rigorous scientific manner (van Manen, 1990). It works to reveal the conscious experience of a person as he or she relates to the lived world (Lanigan, 1979). In recent years, phenomenology has served as an effective methodology for researching group members who remain oppressed in a Anglo male dominated society (Gluck & Patai, 1991; Langellier & Hall, Nelson, 1989; Orbe, 1993).

A phenomenological approach takes each experience in its own right as it shows itself and as one is conscious of it in everyday life (Traudt, Anderson, & Meyer, 1987). This consciousness of experience occurs in the body; the basic mode of being in the world. Without a situational context for conscious experience neither origin or organ exist (Stewart & Mickunas, 1990).

Phenomenology holds that to exist is to not only be in the world with

others but, to be influenced by others, to be constitutively involved with the phenomenon as participant and an observer. According to Bogdan and Biklen:

> **. . . people act, not on the basis of pre-determined responses to predefined objects, but rather as interpreting, defining, symbolic animals whose behavior can only be understood by having the researcher enter into the defining process** (quoted in Kuh,1993, p. 278).

For the researcher this involves intuitive reasoning which involves an abductive, situational logic which can bring attention to once invisible issues. The insight that is gained through this methodology can complement traditionally positivist research and offer a more holistic perspective to the African American graduate experience.

PROCEDURE

Phenomenological research involves three steps: collecting descriptions, bracketed reduction of capta, and interpretation of thematic revelatory phrases (For a complete summary see Orbe, 1993). For this research project, descriptions of lived experiences were collected from nine African American graduate students at a mid-sized majority institution in the midwest.

Specifically, six African American women and three African American men served as narrators. These interviewees, although united by ethnicity, reflected a diverse set of life experiences (i.e. age, martial status, economic status, etc.)

A similiar topical protocol, focusing on how narrators experience graduate school, was used to conduct an open-ended and general in-depth interview. Interviews were completed by three interviewers (co-researchers) and lasted approximately forty-five to ninety minutes. Topical protocols were bracketed in

order to allow narrators to discuss issues and concerns that were important to them. In this sense, it hoped to reveal their "true voices."

Following the interviews, each co-researcher separately transcribed the interviews. The result was over eighty pages reflecting various descriptions of the lived experiences of the narrators. The next step in the phenomenological process is to begin a hermeneutic phenomenal reduction and reflection.

CURRENT HERMENEUTIC PHENOMENAL REFLECTION

The analysis that follows begins with reduction and hermeneutic reflection on the nine textual narratives. Van Manen (1990) refers to this step as "textual labor." An appropriate metaphor for describing the 'job' one does when engaging the interviewees text.

In this analysis, the focus is on <u>how</u>: How African American graduate students experience their majority host institution. One statement or phrase emerged from the "labor" that was essentially revealing and insightful. It is best described in the quote: "It happens all the time and everywhere." This revelatory phrase unravels the essence of the existential dilemma that African American students experience in their majority institution: that of ethnic prejudice; referred to in the revelatory phrase as **It**.

However, for many African Americans prejudice is much more a function of color than one of ethnicity (origin). Father Ted Hesburgh, the lifelong educator/elder statesman of Notre Dame and a founding member of the Civil Rights Commission, makes this point clear in an interview reported in *Black Issues in Higher Education* (1992). In the interview he states that for African Americans:

> ... It's a color thing, it's visibility. You can have a room filled with people from 50 ethnic backgrounds and nobody knows who is

> from where. But let a Black person walk in and they know there is a Black in the room. Prejudice is... looking down at people and being prejudiced against them because of something as irrelevant as color... Black, 1992, p.9]).

The revelatory phrase "*It* happens all the time and every-where," emerged as essential to the lived experiences of the narrators. Other references to "*it*" indicate the pervasive nature of the problematic. Narrators explained that "*It* can happen any where in the states;" "They don't understand how their not understanding implicates them in *it*;" "*It's* just at the border and you know*it's* going to seep out;" and "There's also the media and their role in *it*.." These revelatory phrases were conjoined with others to produce three major themes: (1) covert/overt formation of ethnic prejudice, leading to (2) bodylessness and fragmentation resulting in (3) bonded bodies of temporal communications. The themes seemingly arranged themselves in a natural order to provide **examples of**, **consequences of**, and **strategies for** dealing with ethnic prejudice. A compilation of these three essential themes demonstrate how the essence of ethnic prejudice is organized and defined.

COVERT/OVERT EXAMPLES OF ETHNIC PREJUDICE

Each interview transcript provided instances where ethnic prejudice intertwined with the daily interaction on campus and in the community. According to the narrators, forms of ethnic prejudice included patterns of segregation between African American and Anglo students on the campus, exploitation of the African American community through the media, and harassment by the community and police officers. Some of the forms of prejudice were overt, whereas others were covert. Regardless of the form, ethnic prejudice had a significant impact on how the narrators experienced

graduate school in their majority host environment.

In regard to overt community/police harassment, a single woman relates

> Only the other night a Black student had a party and in fifteen minutes the police were in and everybody had to go. This was Friday. On Saturday, the house opposite mine, a white student had a party. The police never came and the music was blasting. Everything was fine and nobody ever said anything... But I want my people to have the same.

Another single woman remembers:

> I had gone home [out of town]. I left on a Thursday and got back Sunday... I went to my mailbox and saw another notice [from the landlord] saying that I'd been playing loud music and had been disruptive and that several tenants had complained. ... and I said *I wasn't even home.*

A married student expresses the spacio-temporal dimension of ethnic prejudice thusly:

> [I've had] conversations with people; particularly one professor and a couple of students telling [me] about incidents of being followed by the police down here. It's probably happened to almost every black man. If not in Athens it's happened to them in thei home town...just followed because **you** are black. ***It*** happens **all the time** and **everywhere.**

For these students, ***'it,*** as an overt act signifying prejudice, is time-less.

Merleau-Ponty (1968), points out that there is no such thing as linear time. Time cannot be differentiated from the past, present, or future. This ideology is apparent in the phrase of this student who finds ***it*** happening **"all the time."** ***It*** also, is not space contained or confined to a particular area. ***It*** is as the air she breathes. It is inescapable as long as her body (and the other-self, expressed here through her identification with the researcher as **you**) is aware in this world for **"*it* is everywhere."**

The spatio-temporal layer of ethnic prejudice is expressed by another narrator as a "feeling"-- something she can't exactly put her finger on although she is aware of ***its'*** overshawdowing presence. She expresses it as

> ... a feeling in the every day or every other day or every other week

> incidents. But in a sense it can happen anywhere you are in the States. It's just a feeling and you just -- I don't know!

She struggles to describe the experiences - but stops! when the preconscious realizes that there are no available terms nor, an identifiable sense through which it can be processed. This sense of inarticulation is the result of living under the oppressive restraints of a communication system which does not allow her a true voice for expressing her lived experiences. ***It*** unsteadies her, resulting in feelings of ambiguity and mutedness (Kramarae, 1981).

One narrator , on the other hand, is confident about her understanding of the essense of ***it***. She, like earlier narrators, who positioned the police as socially violent has identified **they**, the majority student, as being the perpetrators of "the feeling." The pattern of segregation that exists between African American and Anglo students is crystal clear to her. In relation to a guest lecturer at a campus wide convocation she states of the 'majority' audience of students:

> I don't think people got the real political overtones of what she was trying to say. Because I don't think they are really capable of really trying to get it. They were thinking-- this is wrong but at the same time they were laughing at the humor and *everything got left by the wayside*... To get them to realize that no, you would never be identified in an airport as a courier no matter what you do because you don't have the basic skin color.

Anglos' inability to understand the role that they play in fostering her existential dilemma is further heightened by the fact that it is 'they' who are unaware of their involvement in ***it***. She continues:

> Even the people who are cool or who think they are with it sometimes they don't --sometimes there's no real connection. ... They don't understand how their not understanding implicates them in *it*.

She seems to suggest that their-selves and their-other, intersubjectively, experience a collapse. While they wish to be 'with-it' (to understand the essence of black students), their natural attitude of an institutionalize discourse predicated on a Anglo male/female experience keeps them with-out. Their fate

therefore, is to remain with *it:* ethnic prejudice. In the meantime 'everything' that is necessary to the essence of their being gets "left by the wayside", including their-selves.

Irvine (1992) makes a similar claim in his poem *What it's Like to Be Black.* He states that "most whites...can't see the realities." "It's a black thang, you wouldn't understand", a motto widely heard and seen on college campuses across the country, reflects the undeniable positioning of Anglos which negates their ability to view the world from alternate vantage points.

This lack of insight also, exists in the media for a narrator who recalls her first year on campus:

> When I was a freshman, it was just awful. Whenever there was a fight (among Black students) it was on the front page.

Anglo students, for the most part, do not acknowledge the dangerous agenda-setting function that these articles represent to dominant society. A male student speaks of the media's tendency to perpetuate a societal agenda that presupposes an Anglo male/female attitude toward African Americans. He states that

> There's also the media and their role in it, trying to come into the Black community, and seeing us in a position, and coming to exploit us more.

Another makes an international connection.

> We really need to start making the connections (between Los Angeles, Tiannamen Square, Thailand incidents) because what's current to them is the pressure. ... We can't count on the media to do that... they're separating them from us, they're not making the connections that people can see.

Similar covert patterns of ethnic prejudice emerged on campus for other graduate students. These patterns involved subtle innuendos and predispositions

toward African American students which often reflect hidden attitudes of the majority. A narrator says of her experiences in the classroom:

> Many times you go into the classroom and you hear these borderline racist remarks, borderline sexist remarks, *it's just at the border and you know it's going to seep out.*

According to feminist scholar bell hooks (1984), borderline issues are uniquely familiar to the African American's way of being in the world for they experience living on the edge of towns, across the tracks, and in the margins. She might even suggest that recognition of the borderline is their 'natural attitude.' Thus, this narrator's marginality presupposes her recognition of oozing substances "just at the border"--especially those seeping through the essence of her being.

The seepage of ***it*** which invades the classroom of the narrator above leads to stereotyping African American students as lazy, unintelligent, unqualified, or as special "affirmative action cases." She chronicles this phenomenon by relating the following incident:

> There was this professor who said,... "just because you've good grades in other classes doesn't mean you're going to get good grades in here..." And that same quarter I came down with measles... And she said "you know *you people always* have an excuse .

The student is confronted here with a meaning that she occupies in the world of other's consciousnesses. In this case, the world constituted by her professor in whicn "you people" not only underscores the relational pattern separating them (African Americans) from us (Anglos) but, it also situates them in a temporal space that exists all-ways and for all-times. She continues:

> I went to the ombudsman, he's a white male and he said "she (the professor) is a real good friend of mine and I really can't see her doing that." And I said AAAAhh!

The incidents listed thus far involved African American graduate student's experiences with the community, students, and faculty. A male student describes a situation where administrators also, participate in *it* by communicating differently with non-Anglo students.

> They (two Anglo administrators) would say "no-o-o, no-o-o, not that." They would talk real loud, sort of like they are stupid.

These covert/overt examples reveal the basic structure of ethnic prejudice as a formless organism that lives in the body of its host as an evasive part of its normal functioning. The host body is often unaware of its own infection but, at anytime its virus like agent begans to ooze and seep out of thehost body into the essence of others' being causing dis-ease. How it is further organized and defined within the relational and corporal layer of the phenomenon can more readily be viewed in the context of the resulting consequences.

BODYLESSNESS AND FRAGMENTATION AS A CONSEQUENCES OF ETHNIC PREJUDICE

Historically, most institutions of higher learning in the United States were created and operated to cater to a homogeneous student body (Orbe, 1992). Under represented groups, like African Americans were marginalized and forced to assimilate in order to succeed. The assimilation has created several dilemmas fc Blacks that result in a fragmented psychological-spiritual-lived body (Ford-Ahme 1992).

The noted scholar W.E.B. DuBois (1961), and the first black to earn a graduate degree (Ph.D.) from Harvard (1835), discusses this dilemma in *The Soul*

of Black Folks . He refers to Blacks as '7th sons' who have been given a second sight in the American world to compensate for 'the veil' with which they have been born. He states that the American world renders no true self-consciousness for African Americans but instead, "lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world." He concludes with an impassioned argument on behalf of black folk's souls:

> It is a peculiar sensation this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, or measuring one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness (p. 3).

Hale-Benson (1986) posits further, that African American males, in order to sucessfully function within this society, must master three cultures; white, black and that of Black male. Black women share the same lebenswelt for they too, must master multiple cultures and the variant function of sexism. The negotiation of this double/triple consciousness is "the ultimate psychosis psychiatry" deals with today (Lingis, 1991, p. 7-8). The "schizophrenic-like" state of African Americans is unique indeed for in their multiple dis-order they must also observe from the outside, their dismemberment.

A male student recounts a situtation where underlying ethnic prejudice and his consequential isolation pushed him so far into the margin that he changed disciplines and transferred to another college within the university. He recounts

> ... a situation where I was in class and a group of people exchanged questions that we had to do. A group of three or whatever had completed them and then exchanged questions. And I am sitting there struggling to get all of mine done by myself, and you know... I felt like I didn't have anybody who I could relate to. In my classes, I always felt like an outsider.

A similar scenario is summarized by a couple of female narrators who mirror DuBois', analysis when they make the following statements:

> There's always a chance that you live double lives kind of. There's the life you live that's white American and the life that's your own culture. And you have to live both. [T]hey're not going to adjust to you lifestyle, or who you are, or what you enjoy.

> I think I'm different and I['ve] felt that way for a long time... but how I'm different, I don't know.

This difference is corporally evidenced by an existential body that is imploded as well as exploded. For example: the female narrator who maintains a family and a part-time job has fallen behind in her classwork. She describes an incident wherein she contemplated leaving school.

> Um, the very beginning of this year knowing I was going into the year in a deficit with all this *stuff on my head*... Knowing my 4th week of school I had to have papers done [from the previous quarter] or it would threaten, you know, my being here. I would think is it worth it? *It is worth me going crazy?*

Another recalls a memo which described her as "irresponsible" and "not deserving to be a graduate student" after some miscommunication occurred concerning summer research support hours. She learned about the memo when she was summoned by the graduate director of her program.

> And I agonized over that because it (memo) was in my file. And it is still in my file. ... She told me you need to keep records. You need to do this. And of course I didn't do any of that. She was telling me that then. *Now my backs up against the wall.*

Lingis (1991, p. 5-6) concludes from Merleau-Ponty's paradoxical polemic against analytic physiology that immobilizing subjects, disconnecting them from active involvement in a situation can cause knee jerk reactions. This, he says, is the method one uses for producing reflex arcs. Consider the narration mentioned

in the 'examples' section. It provided solidarity between the ombudsman and the teacher but, for the student it was "a tap of the mallet on the knee provok[ing] the immediate reaction" of AAAAAhh! (Lingis, p. 6). The same immobilization is experienced by the narrator above who finds her back pinned to a wall.

When remembering class assignments that were due, housework that needed to be done, and job related tasks to be accomplished, the married student reflects: "I just can't believe *I put myself through the wringer like that.*" At one point she recalls "times when I just *throw up my hands.*"

The experiences that are revealed in the phrases above exemplify a bodylessness and/or fragmentation brought about by social meanings and personal dilemmas. Hands that are 'tossed into the air' for example, cannot handle all of the activity required of them. A head that is weighted down by 'all this stuff' finds it difficult to concentrate. Hands nor head function well as organisms responsible for the task of preparing papers, doing research, washing dishes, performing a job, or turning pages of a book. As noted, the present body is immobilized by the phenomenon by either being pinned to a wall or drained and wrung dry. The preconscious reasons with the conscious body that their fate is an imploded-exploded body; for in their twoness, their psycho-spritiual-lived-body is witness to its own destruction. For these students the fundamental three R's of relief, release and respite are sought through a body bonded by temporal communication strategies.

BONDING STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH ETHNIC PREJUDICE

The multiple consciousness that DuBois (1903) described and Hale-Benson (1986) expounded upon, has a built-in safe guard for African American graduate students striving to negotiate their psycho-spiritual-lived bodies. As was

explicated in the previous section, the multiple split provides a unique perspective for those confined within a schizophrinic state. Their many selves also creates the potential to reposition themselves as multiple observers. While one self may view its distruction, another self stands guard outside shrewedly observing the panorama. Hooks (1984) explains that this culturally determined way of looking from the outside tends to strengthen a sense of self and solidarity with others of similar experiences. This instance evokes hands in the air joining with other hands in the air, not so much for the making of 'integral man' (Lingus, 1991), or wholeness of one-self but, to unify similar selves of other. As revealed in the narratives this unification through repositioning is apparent among the coping strategies of African American graduate students. Peterson (1992) explains that it is important for one to understand that s/he is not alone in pain and tragedy.

For example, a sense of connectedness to 'other' was often expressed by - one narrator who referred to the police harrassment of black men. When a direct question was posed that solicited *her* experiences, she often responded in *"we'* terms, in *'you'* terms, and sometime in *'he'* terms indicating her ability to totally transcend or leave her own body to become one with her spouse, the community of men, and even with the interviewer. This coporeally distanced body that stepped outside of itself to merge with others, had items place in **'the'** file not *her* file. It was as though **'the'** file was some omnipotent dossier containing the life experiences of all known men and women of similar life worlds. And at anytime ***it*** (that which was put into the file), could emerge to seal the fate of her educational success along with her other(s).

This bonding with others is similar to Lingis' (1991, p. 10) view of the 'integral man' as a "theme... of capitalism" wherein, bodies dismember themselves for economic reasons by connecting to their possessions. In this case

African American graduate students whose lived-world is experienced in fragmentation, tend not to seek self through acquisition of possessions immanating from 'resources and instruments of production' but, seek instead to connect themselves to the clan. Integration of their own body, maintaining "all [of] ones properties and attributes" (Lingus, p. 11) is gained by joining their body parts to similar others in an attempt to form a unit. For these '7th sons', shielded by a 'birth veil', the past is forever being observed by the 'other' with great intensity. For them the past **is** the present. The past is also the future for the support body.

The history of African Americans in this country recounts numerous incidents of harassment at the whim of Anglo Americans--from Harriet Taubman through Emmitt Till to Rodney King. Due to the longevity of these patterns, many African Americans (including the narrators of this study), adjust quickly to instances of ethnic prejudice. For the past several years, incidents of overt ethnic prejudice have been on the rise at campuses where Anglos are in the majority (e.g. Wyche & Frierson, 1990). When these instances do occur, African Americans simply deal with the situation. As one of the interviewees states:

> It's a matter of looking at what they (other African Americans) have been through, and applying it to fit my situation; and using that as an inspiration. I just have to do what I gotta do.

What this student does appears to be connected to members of the clan's past actions. By bonding his spiritual self in spacio-temporality he finds inspiration, fresh air, a renewed spirit. A female bonds to the clan by collapsing time in similar ways. She articulates her motivation as:

> a continum...that's never stopped. And you can look back and find strength, you can, you can keep moving. So that's basically what I'm saying is that it's there. You just have to, you just have to see it.

Other coping strategies were found in present relief seeking talk to-with-from others. A female student who phones home to say:

> "Mom ... I just gotta get away from this shit for a while...I gotta get outta here...

After a conversation revolving around metatalk, she is eventually soothed by her mother's talk which calms her down. Another narrator explains that she shares an office with a classmate and "when it gets to be too much I can turn around and dump on him... he listens."

One student misses the opportunity for talk. For her, the clan itself is scattered and fragmented. She finds that the 'coming together' of Black students who share the same life-world seldom occurs. It is the bonding with similar souls that evidences a move toward her true self-consciousness. She explains:

> You never have a chance to... say yeah, it happened to me [too] and this is how it worked and it's just support. So you know you ain't crazy. It's never that come together time.

Coming together provides support and solidarity, as hooks (1984), has indicated. For African American men it is their "significant other", all African American woman in this case, who function as support. They:

> ...keep me focused on things, and tries to keep me from things-- from going nuts... or they are someone who can relate to stress and can just balance you out sometimes.

Yet, another male speaks of talking "to his boys" (other African American male students). African American men often felt that they better identified with other African American men--that these individuals understood common problems, situations, and pressures. Although one student had known his fellow students only a short time during his tenure as a graduate student, he states:

> I mean right now I don't think that there is anything that I wouldn't talk to them about. A problem or if something was really troubling

> me. They have helped me a lot. And we have grown together...spending time, living together,and going through the craziness together has brought us together...one of my philosophies--up until you're married, your friends--your boys--are always going to be your boys.

Another narrator says of his male companion,

> ...we think basically the same, so whatever is on my mind, he knows what it is and knows what I'm feeling. And a lot of the time, he doesn't try to minimize what I'm feeling.

And finally, a female student recalling her first year shares that she:

> spent some nights crying. Just crying! Especially the first quarter, the first year. And I'm not a , I don't think I'm a soft person but, I remember I went into (African American Professors') office. And I started to talk to her and the next thing you know, I'm just like I said, I'm crying. And I definitely don't cry in front of other people.

This is not the social model of self she wishes to project but yet, her preconscious body is given to fits of crying anyway. She concludes by adding:

> She said "you know, you just can't do it all equally. And just realize that and live with *it*." That was some of the best advice anybody gave me. And you know- basically let me know that I just needed to take *it* one day at a time and just deal with *it*.

Support through bonding with others in past/present life worlds and talk/listening serve to unify the student clan members; to insulate them from the dis-order created by *it*. Bonding with those who experience "the craziness together" helps to unite forces in confronting ethnic prejudice in their majorityinstitution.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Multiplicity As A treatment (In Disguise) For-Against A Pathogen

In the reflections offered herewith of African American graduate students' revelatory phrases, an attempt is made to perform what Merleau-Ponty calls hyper-reflection (Nelson,1986, p.134). Nelson explains it as "that which takes itself and the changes it introduces into the phenomenon into further account."

When reflecting on the relationship between the themes of *covert/overt prejudice* found in the *examples;* the *consequences* of *bodylessness and segmentation;* and *bonding body strategies of temporal communications*, ethnic prejudice emerges in the final reduction as a pathogen.

In the study of plants, living agents as bacteria, fungi, and viruses are pathogens. The plants that support pathogens are called hosts. Disease results from the interaction of a pathogen with its hosts. The pathogen can then be passed on to other plants via the soil, contaminated agricultural instruments, or by one on one contact. Its living agents of micro organisms are not visible to the naked eye. Its structure; form-less. It has no real substance and yet, its infectious agents can be felt in the conscious body of the narrators.

Being without form allows the pathogen of ethnic prejudice indescrible mobility. It can ooze, or it can seep, 'everywhere' and at 'all times.' The **in**tensity and **ex**tent of the pathogen depends mainly on environmental factors (i.e. campus, community, police) which preconditions its' host carriers; and its diversity, on the way it perennates from season to season. Whatever its state of perenniating in a majority institution, it **a**ffects and **in**fects the narrators of this study.

The micro organismic dis-**ease** renders African American graduate students ambivalent. In one sense their preconscious suggest that the feeling's

generated by the formless agents are negative or defy description. They are cited by the students as "awful," "stupid," "I don't know" and the frustrated wail of "AAAAAAh!" Symptoms of stress, imbalance, inability to focus, disorientation (referred to as "craziness") and fragmentation plague the narrator's interiority. Just at the point when their resistence appears to be at its lowest, their conscious body finds an instance where others have experienced the same malaise. This reflection envokes the kind of solace one finds upon returning home after being on an extended journey.

We know that space can affect the way we feel. Boundary-less space for example, can make one feel vulnerable and exposed or it can make one feel free (Van Manen, 1990). For the narrators of this analysis, the pathogen **it,** since it is not confined to a specific space such as a test tube in a laboratory (nor has all of its methods of transmission been definitively deduced) roams free. The narrators therefore are vulnerable to attack anywhere and at anytime in the contaminable environment of their majority host institution. The assaulting pathogen however, activates a time/space defense button immediately, in the preconscious mind of 'other' for these students.

This defense mechanism serves as an antidote which may be found in support groups of others who are (or have been) likewise infected. When-wherever others are found, they contribute to the students' fundamental sense of well-being. They provide a comforting niche much like the lived-space of home where they can be what they are. Home space has been described by Heidegger (1971) and Bollnow (1960) as the "inner sanctity of self protection where we can be by our-selves" (Manen, 1990, p. 102). The narrators relate this sense of self below:

> I go home because there are people I can talk to and I don't have to pay for it. ...I just go home because I have friends who are a social outlet... When I'm home I'm relaxed. When I unwind I'll get on the phone and call Eric. Or someone is going to call me. And just nine times out of ten, it is going to be another African

> American. If you go to one of the African American parties you say *these are not the people I went to class with today. It's more laid back.* It's different.

This supine position of a body at rest is in marked contrast to bodies pinned to the wall; pressed through wringers; heads burdened by 'stuff;' or hands flying through space searching for other supportive hands.

For these students the spacio-temporality of the past is similar to calling mom and listening to her talk. "It calms me down," one student claims. This interaction and bonding with others who have been in/affected by the dis-ease and survived it, serves as further treatment against the dis-order of bodylessness and framentation perpetrated by the view that both the institution and society holds of them.

Sarte discovered through living his phenomenology that humankind by interiorizing their exteriority can surpass it toward their goal. This is simply paradigmatic for African American graduate students living a world constituted by others. In *Saint Genet* Sarte states "the essential is not what others have made of man, but what he has made from what others have made of him" (quoted in Busch, 1972, p. 122).

The African American's pathology of multipleness may be as DuBois postulated "a peculiar sensation" but it also appears to be the best defense (treatment) against (for) the pathogen of ethnic prejudice which permeates the environment of a majority university. And this is "Look[ing] at the bright side of the very, very dark side..." (Irvine, [see Orbe, 1992]).

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